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AFMC people building upon the centennial legacy

by Gen. Lester L. Lyles, Commander, Air Force Materiel Command

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio — As we begin our year-long celebration of the 100th anniversary of powered flight, I am amazed by the tremendous advances in technology we've made in such a seemingly short time.

Since the Wright Brothers' first flight and the development of the aircraft as a weapon system, the United States has become the most powerful country the world has known. Our technological edge has made airpower a decisive factor in every military engagement since World War II.

Providing increased capabilities to America's warfighters to maintain that edge is the heart and soul of our mission in Air Force Materiel Command, and I could not be more proud of the way the men and women of this command have achieved that mission this past year.

AFMC people are building upon the centennial legacy every day by developing, acquiring and sustaining the most advanced air and space technologies and systems to give our warfighters the capabilities they need to accomplish their missions and return home safely.

We developed and fielded a Wind Corrected Munitions Dispenser, which so dramatically increased the accuracy of cluster bombs dropped by B-52 bombers that the venerable aircraft could be used for close air support for the first time in its 50-year history.

AFMC people increased the Air Force's capability by arming the Predator unmanned aerial vehicle with the Hellfire missile. This powerful weapon system provides near real-time video to decision makers to identify targets, engage the targets and accomplish battle damage assessment quickly and accurately.

Our people tested and delivered the Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicle to the warfighters engaged in Operation Enduring Freedom, even though the high-tech UAV is still in the engineering, manufacturing and development phase of acquisition.

Men and women in our depots implemented a program called, "Lean," to cut costs, overtime and repair time throughout depot maintenance processes. In many cases, they've cut repair cycle time and put aircraft back into the hands of the operational commands sooner for use in the war on terrorism.

Their work on the KC-135 tankers is a prime example. Workers reduced that aircraft's depot repair days from 400 in the year 2000 to 225 in 2002. Putting that into perspective, what took a little more than a year to do a couple of years ago now takes about seven months - putting systems back into the warfighter's hands is what AFMC is all about.

AFMC people are completely dedicated to supporting the warfighter. We are taking a hard look at everything we do to determine how we can transform to improve that support.

We're using programs such as divestiture to get rid of activities or tasks that are no longer needed, and spiral development to provide increased capabilities to warfighters when they need it most - today!

We're working to ensure we have the right people with the right experience in the right jobs through workforce shaping. We're using an approach called Enterprise Leadership to make all of our systems work with each other.

We're bringing the warfighter into the development and testing phases of our weapon systems to ensure we're providing the capabilities they need. The bottom line - AFMC is developing an expeditionary mindset, becoming more efficient and responsive - easier for the warfighter to do business with!

The men and women of AFMC have done an outstanding job this past year, and I am extremely proud and yet humbled to serve with you! As heirs to the Wright Brothers' legacy, AFMC people are continuing today to deliver Proactive Rapid Integrated Dominant Effects to America's warfighters! @